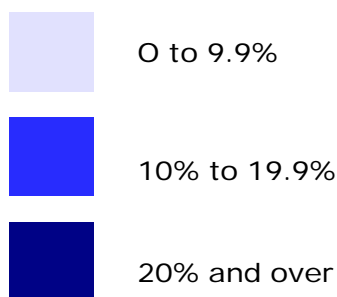
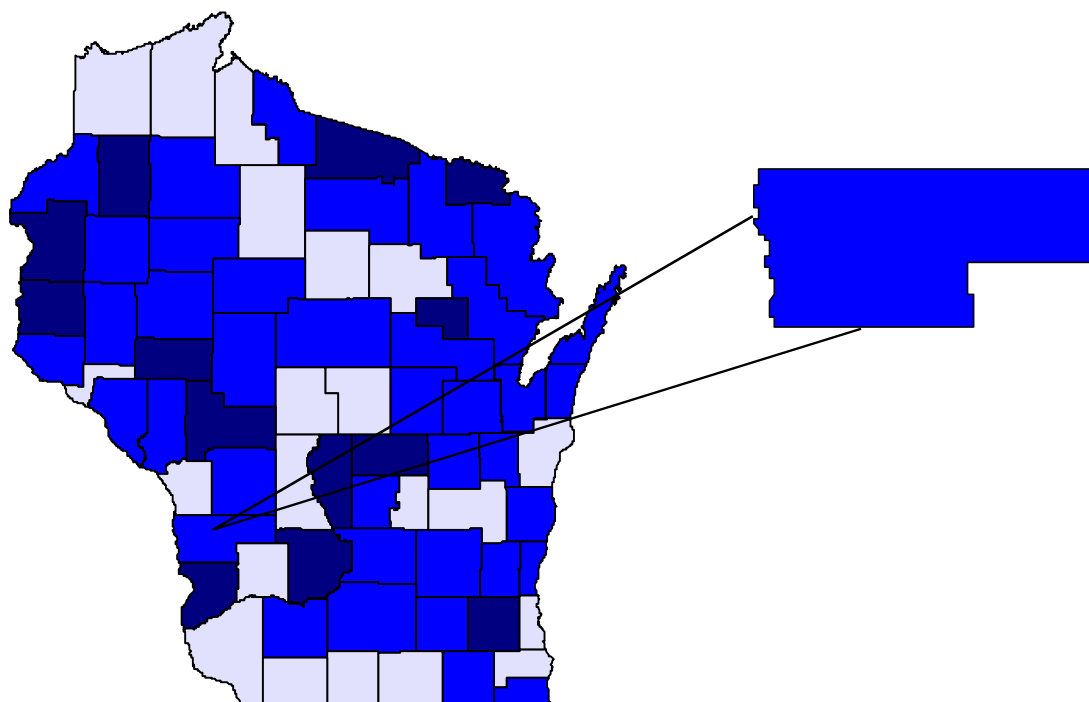


Vernon County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Bureau of Workforce Information
October 2001



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of Vernon County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

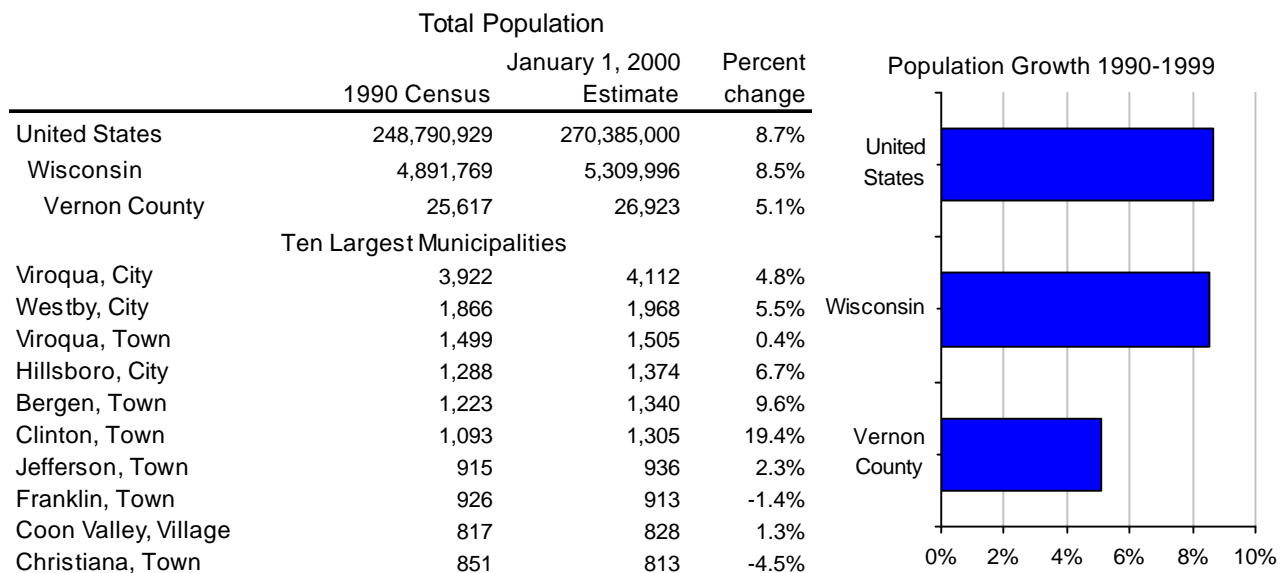
A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst,
Bill Brockmiller, by telephone (608-785-9337) or email (brockwi@dwd.state.wi.us).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

Vernon County Population and Civilian Labor Force

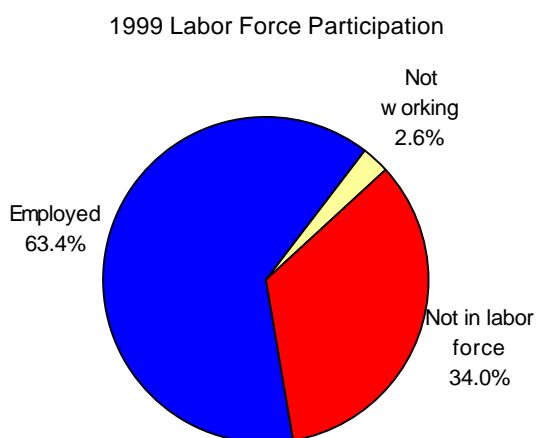
Vernon County's population has increased 5.1 percent during the first nine years of the 1990s. Vernon County has grown much slower than Wisconsin or the United States. The growth rate in Vernon County during the 1980s decade was slightly different. Population declined by one percent during the 1980s decade. Vernon County has recovered from that decline, the January 1, 2000 population estimate (26,923) exceeds the 1980 population level of 25,642. Almost 75 percent of the population increase in Vernon since 1990 is the result of more people moving into the County than moving out of the County (net migration). Vernon County's population also increased by having more births than deaths. This component of population change is called natural increase.



* Vernon County portion only

Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons who are 16 years old and older. Readers should keep in mind that people who are "not working" includes people who are "unemployed" and people who are "not in the labor force". "Unemployed" does not include all people who are "not working", some people who are not working are not technically unemployed. Examples of people who are not working but who are not unemployed are: retirees, fulltime students choosing not to work, persons with too many employment barriers to enter the work force, persons that have become discouraged and stopped looking for work, or other people who choose not to work or look for work. Persons in a prison, mental institution, or nursing home are not counted as members of the labor force, nor are they counted as unemployed. The pie chart displayed below provides estimates of employed, unemployed and those "not in the labor force" as a percentage of the civilian non-institutional population.



Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The labor force grows and contracts with changes in the population and changes in the seasons. Each spring, the labor force expands as seasonal workers begin searching for summer jobs. The labor force is dependent on the number of residents in the county; and their interest in the jobs that are available.

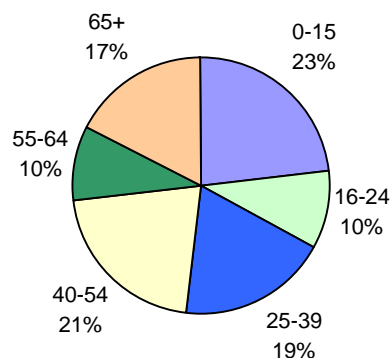
In 1999, the participation rate in Vernon County was 66 percent. This is substantially lower than the state participation rate of 74.4 percent. Vernon County has a higher than state average percentage of their population not working nor looking for work. Almost one-third of the resident population is not working nor looking for work. here are a number of reasons why persons may choose not to participate in the workforce including; inability to perform available work, retirement from the workforce, physical incapacity to work, and the belief that there is no work available for them.

Several Wisconsin Counties, including Vernon, with relatively low participation rates have low income ratings as well, suggesting that lower income rates may discourage workers from entering the workforce. Vernon County employer's future recruitment efforts need to include ways to increase the participation rate. Like most of Wisconsin, Vernon County is experiencing a decline in population aged between 25 and 39 years of age, and increasing populations in the 40-54 age cohort. Employers will need to examine their recruitment strategies in order to appeal to the new workforce demographic.

Vernon County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population 1990 Census	Population 1999 Estimate	Percent change
0-15	6,308	6,254	-0.9%
16-24	2,454	2,628	7.1%
25-39	5,509	5,038	-8.5%
40-54	4,168	5,720	37.2%
55-64	2,415	2,600	7.7%
65+	4,763	4,682	-1.7%

Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, Official Population Projections 1990-2020 and US Census Bureau



Vernon County Civilian Labor Force Data

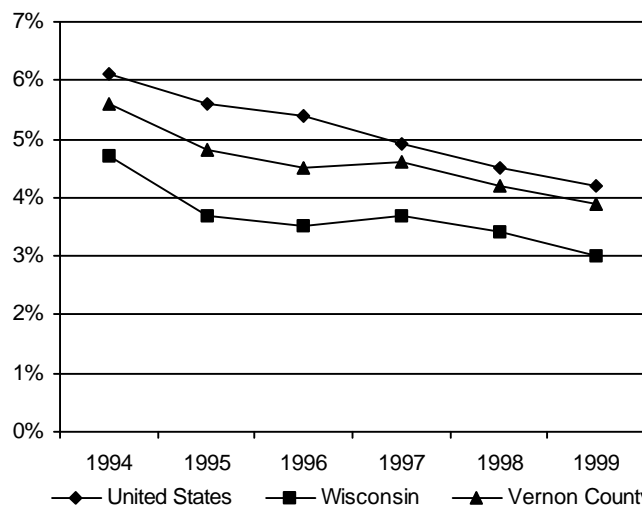
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	13,300	13,500	13,600	13,800	14,000	13,400
Employed	12,600	12,900	13,000	13,200	13,400	12,900
Unemployed	740	650	620	640	590	530
Unemployment Rate	5.6%	4.8%	4.5%	4.6%	4.2%	3.9%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

In the five year time span 1994-1999, the number of jobs in Vernon County by place of work has increased from 6,700 to 8,000, an absolute increase of 1,300 jobs. During that same period, the number of people in Vernon County who are identified as employed by place of residence has grown from 12,600 to 12,900, an increase of 300. This seeming anomaly is brought about, in part, because of Vernon's vibrant commuting patterns. That growth in jobs, combined with a large draw of workers commuting from Vernon has accommodated a sizable drop in the unemployment rate for Vernon County.

During the course of a given year, Vernon County's monthly unemployment rates report both high peaks and low valleys of unemployment. February usually reports the highest unemployment rate for the year in Vernon County, the high is usually in February statewide as well. In recent history, Vernon County's February rate has ran between 6.2 and 8 percent. In September Vernon usually records its lowest rate for the year, recent September rates have ran between 2.8 and 3.5 percent.

Unemployment Rate Comparison



Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Unemployment rate patterns are roughly similar on a statewide basis. These patterns can be explained by several factors including; Wisconsin's weather patterns, farm growing seasons, Wisconsin manufacturers production schedules, shopping seasons peaks and valleys, and tourist seasons.

Vernon County Commuting Patterns

	Commute Into	Commute From	Net Commute
La Crosse County	2,040	363	-1,677
Monroe County	489	275	-214
Juneau County	231	101	-130
Sauk County	80	18	-62
Richland County	168	189	21
Crawford County	77	181	104
Elsewhere	321	28	-293
Total	3,406	1,155	-2,251

Work within Vernon County 8,017

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns, 1994.

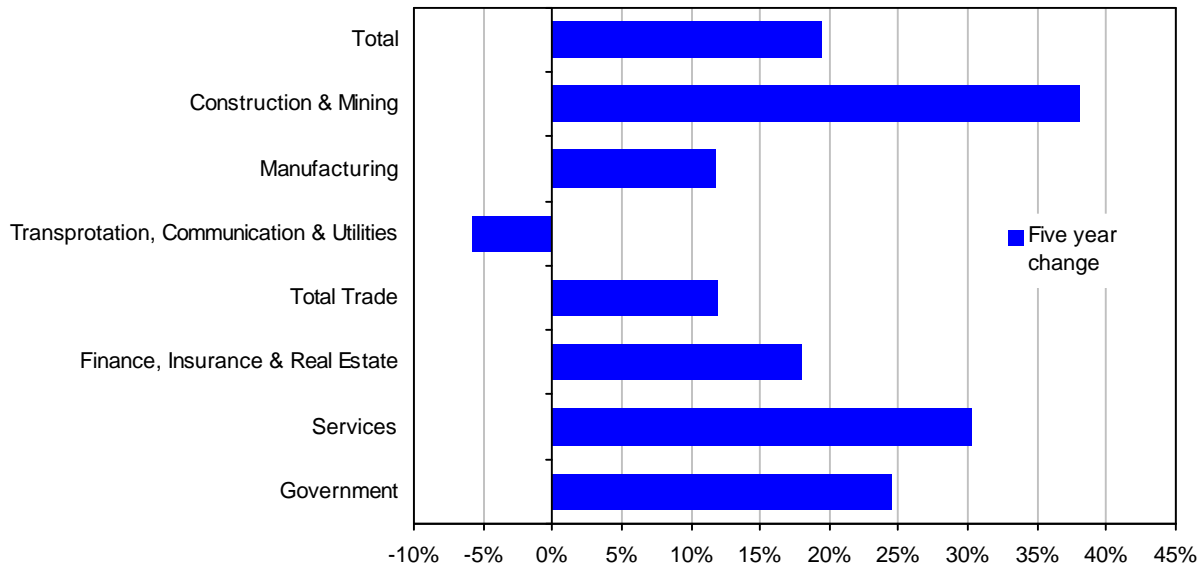


Vernon County workers are very mobile. As of the 1990 Census, over 25 percent of all employed Vernon County residents work outside of the county. La Crosse County is the destination for two-thirds of the out-bound commuters. About 15 percent travel to Monroe County. Although Crawford County borders Vernon County to the south, there is only a modest amount of commuting between the two counties in either direction.

There are many reasons for Vernon County's large number of commuters. Some townships in the northern part of Vernon County may be becoming "cottage communities" for persons working in La Crosse. The towns of Wesby and Bergen may be examples of this with their higher than county average population growth. Another factor is, on average, wages paid by La Crosse employers have been and continue to be higher than wages for similar positions in Vernon County. The wage differential has shown signs of narrowing in recent years. La Crosse County provides professional and managerial workers more opportunities than are currently available within Vernon County.

As of the press time for this publication, specific commuting data was not yet available from Census 2000.

Vernon County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
							1 year	5 year
Total	6,732	7,051	7,098	7,377	7,751	8,037	3.7%	19.4%
Goods Producing	1,027	1,082	1,089	1,125	1,141	1,207	5.9%	17.5%
Construction & Mining	225	232	243	255	253	311	22.7%	38.1%
Manufacturing	803	850	846	870	888	897	1.0%	11.8%
Durable	307	408	431	430	473	537	13.5%	74.8%
Nondurable	495	442	415	440	415	360	-13.2%	-27.3%
Service Producing	5,705	5,969	6,010	6,252	6,611	6,830	3.3%	19.7%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	358	330	327	325	324	337	4.0%	-5.8%
Total Trade	1,882	1,911	1,903	1,982	1,995	2,105	5.5%	11.9%
Wholesale	483	495	471	497	515	532	3.4%	10.2%
Retail	1,399	1,416	1,431	1,485	1,480	1,573	6.2%	12.5%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	285	290	284	311	330	336	2.0%	18.0%
Services & Misc.	1,579	1,740	1,780	1,827	1,983	2,058	3.8%	30.3%
Total Government	1,601	1,697	1,716	1,808	1,979	1,993	0.7%	24.5%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding agricultural, military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives. Thus, this information is often referred to as "place of work" data. Vernon has a large number of residents who commute outside of the county to their jobs; this is the most significant reason why the labor force in Vernon was almost double the number of jobs within the county during 1999.

Another reason for the difference between the two sets of data is that while the statistics detailed on this page do not include agricultural employment, the employment number derived from the unemployment statistics program (as shown at the bottom of page 2) does. According to a 1996 report by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, out of all Wisconsin counties, Vernon has the third highest percentage of jobs that were farm and farm-related. In that report, Vernon was one of only four Wisconsin counties with more than 40 percent of employment directly related to farming. The exact percentage of farm and farm related employment in Vernon in 1996 was 42.9 percent.

Vernon County's Largest Industries and Employers

Top 10 Industry Groups

Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Educational Services	9	1,096	-13	107
Health Services	23	897	-34	134
Eating And Drinking Places	40	586	45	65
Executive, Legislative, And General	34	487	31	-12
Social Services	18	449	5	7
Industrial Machinery And Equipment	*	*	*	*
Wholesale Trade-Nondurable Goods	22	357	-29	1
General Merchandise Stores	*	*	*	*
Automotive Dealers & Service Stations	20	265	-14	14
Depository Institutions	9	233	22	17

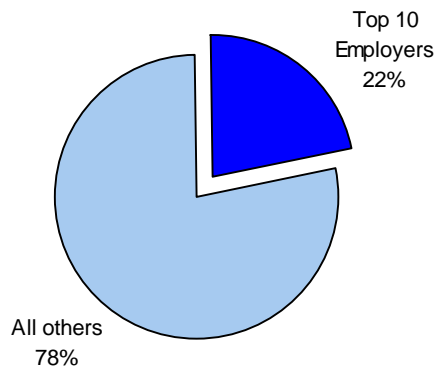
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Top 10 Private Employers

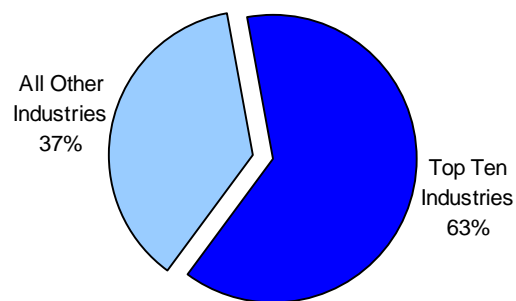
Company	Product or Service	Size
Nelson Industries	Automotive Mufflers	250-499
Vernon Memorial Hospital	General Hospital	250-499
Bethel Home And Services	Social Services/Residential Care	250-499
Walmart Associates	Retailer	100-249
Vernon Area Rehabilitation Center	Training/Vocational Rehabilitation	100-249
St Joseph's Community Health	Health Care and Hospital	100-249
Coulee Region Organic Produce	Growers Association	100-249
Dairyland Power	Electric Services	100-249
NCR Corp	Commercial Printing	100-249
Nelson Mill & Agricenter	Farm Supplies/Animal Feed	50-99

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.

Top 10 Private Employers Share of Nonfarm Employment



Top 10 Industry Groups Share of Nonfarm Employment



During the first quarter of 2000, there was 630 employers in Vernon County. The top ten private sector employers employ 21 percent of all workers working in Vernon County.

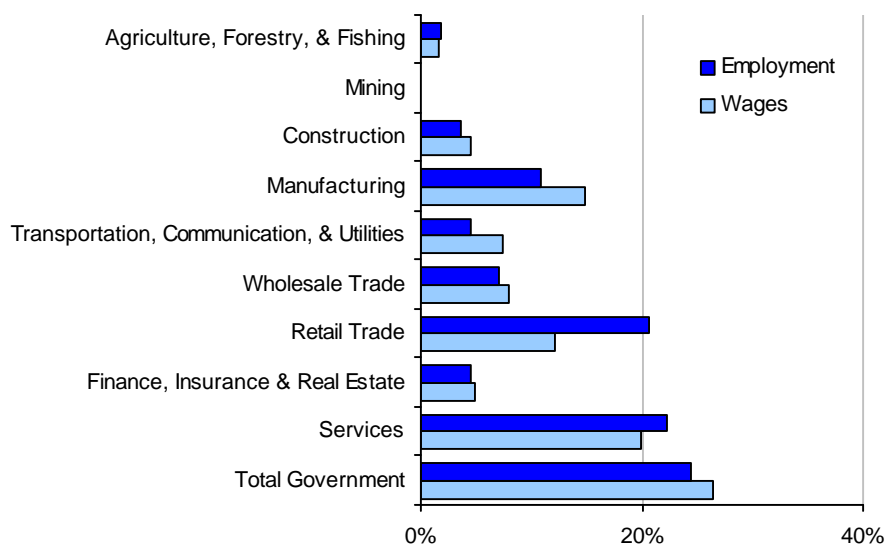
A number of noticeable changes in the Top Ten Private Employer list occurred in 1999. Nelson Industries increased from the third largest to the largest private employer in Vernon County. Wal-Mart increased from sixth to third place., and Dairyland Power nudged up slightly, from ninth to eighth place. Making it's first appearance on the Vernon County top ten list was the Coulee Region Organic Produce Association, placing seventh.

Vernon Memorial Hospital and Bethel Home each slipped a notch, Vernon Area Rehabilitation Center fell two notches and Nelson Mill slipped from seventh to tenth place.

Vernon County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$19,736	\$29,609	66.7%	3.5%	18.7%	7,377
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$17,491	\$21,499	81.4%	-5.0%	-3.4%	140
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$24,507	\$36,772	66.6%	-4.1%	28.0%	270
Manufacturing	\$27,023	\$37,773	71.5%	11.7%	25.2%	800
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$32,237	\$34,523	93.4%	3.0%	24.5%	337
Wholesale Trade	\$21,907	\$38,048	57.6%	3.1%	3.7%	525
Retail Trade	\$11,592	\$15,066	76.9%	3.0%	19.8%	1,528
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$21,280	\$37,911	56.1%	3.0%	21.6%	335
Services	\$17,701	\$26,041	68.0%	6.3%	34.2%	1,644
Total Government	\$21,469	\$32,017	67.1%	1.2%	11.6%	1,797

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division



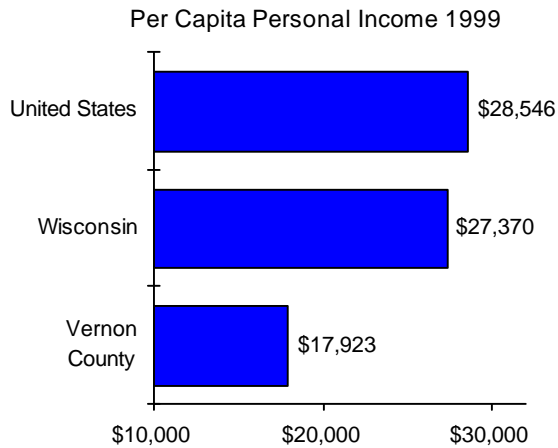
Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

Overall, the average annual wage in Vernon County was two-thirds of the state average in 1999. Only industry (transportation, communications, and public utilities) in Vernon County paid wages that were at least 90 percent of the state average. The transportation, communications, and public utilities industry accounted for just 4.6 percent of all employment in Vernon County.

Like its neighbor to the north, La Crosse County, Vernon County has a high percentage of people working in the service industry. Also like La Crosse County, Vernon County has a large health service industry sector. However, Vernon County's wages in the service industry are much lower than La Crosse County's service industry wages. In 1999, service industry wages in Vernon County were only 68 percent of the state average. Service industry wages were 94.4 percent of the state average in La Crosse County.

The greatest differential in average wages between Vernon County and statewide levels occurs within the finance, insurance, and real estate industry (FIRE). Vernon County does not have a corporate office or major processing center. Thus, there are fewer managerial and technical positions, which often pay higher wages, within Vernon County. A large number of the positions within Vernon County are teller positions which are entry-level and often part-time.

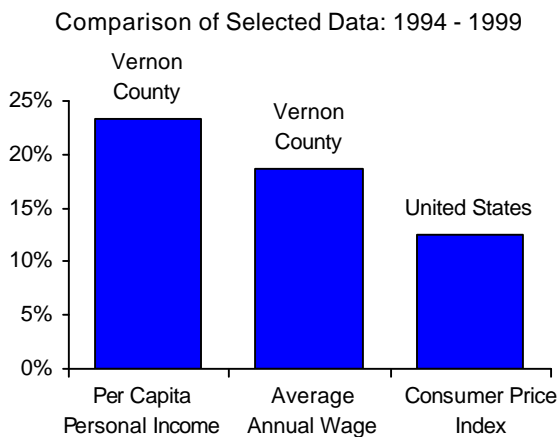
Vernon County Wage and Income Data



Per capita income (PCPI) is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. Vernon County's per capita income ranked 71st of Wisconsin's 72 counties during 1999. Only Menominee County had a lower PCPI in 1999. Per capita income can be influenced by the number of wage earners, average family size, and the median age of the residents. Per capita income can influence the type of services and housing available within a county.

One of the larger components of PCPI and median income in rural counties is farm generated personal income. It fluctuates very wildly and can have a substantial influence on a county's income. Vernon's low rankings in several income measures is, in part, a reflection of recent economic troubles on the family farm.

According to Census 2000, Vernon County's median family household income is \$33,178. That was just 76 percent of Wisconsin's median family income of \$43,791.



Per Capita Personal Income

							Percent Change	
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
Vernon County	\$14,531	\$14,840	\$15,597	\$16,433	\$17,418	\$17,923	2.9%	23.3%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Amusement & Recreation Attendant	\$7.45	\$6.92
Cashier	\$6.99	\$6.74
Farm Equipment Mechanic	\$12.51	\$12.19
Farmworker, Crop	\$8.83	\$8.74
Farmworker, Farm/Ranch Animals	\$8.55	\$8.06
Food Preparation Worker	\$6.97	\$6.62
Hotel/Motel Clerk	\$7.47	\$7.39
Janitor/Cleaner	\$9.50	\$9.14
Machine Feeder & Offbearer	\$9.49	\$9.47
Nonfarm Animal Caretaker	\$7.80	\$7.16
Nurse Aide/Orderly	\$9.24	\$9.10
Registered Nurse	\$21.21	\$20.21
Vehicle Washer/Equipment Cleaner	\$8.83	\$8.24
Veterinary Assistant	\$6.69	\$6.62
Veterinarian	\$37.92	\$31.18

The wages for the selected occupations in this table were reported by employers in non-metropolitan counties in the state who responded to the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Employers from all Wisconsin counties participated in the survey but published data was limited to MSAs and a grouping of 60 or so 'balance-of-state' non-MSA counties.

Wages play a critical role in the economy as both workers and employers try to capitalize their worth. The labor shortage has placed additional pressure on wages and those occupations with a mean (average) and median (mid-point) wage relatively close reflect that. Mean wages include both very low and high wages, but as the labor market tightens employers offering low wages migrate closer to the mid-point.

Source: DWD, BWI, 2000 OES wage survey for Balance-Of-State (non-MSA) counties.